


# REPORT

**DATE:** October 10, 2005

**TO:** Community, Economic and Human Development Committee

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**SUBJECT:** Combining SCAG Economic Forecast Conference and Regional Housing Summit

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:** 

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## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Proceed with the Economic Forecast Conference in January 2006 and the Housing Summit in April 2006 as separate and distinct conferences each with their own mission purpose and audience.

## SUMMARY

Chair Robertson directed staff to look into combining two SCAG annual events: the Regional Housing Summit and the Regional Economic Forecast Conference. Staff evaluated the pros and cons of combining the two conferences and reached the following conclusions.

### PROS

- There are a few complementarities between the economic outlook portion of the conference program and housing. Integration of an economic forecast with housing issues could provide a more comprehensive conference theme
- Some staff time and possibly financial resources could be saved by reducing the number of SCAG events
- A combination conference might attract a more diverse general audience

### CONS

- Weakens the regional focus on two separate and important planning and policy issues
- Creates one less opportunity for CEHD members to take leadership positions on policy issues within the purview of the Committee
- Reduces discussion time available for critical regional issues in both program areas
- The two events currently serve different audiences in the region
- It is late in the planning cycle to attempt to combine meetings; significant staff resources have already been spent on internal planning, including venue assessment and logistics planning. Sponsorship funds for the Economic Forecast Conference have already been received.
- Blurs the distinction between educational activities and activities that assist SCAG to develop a set of initiatives to move forward on policy initiatives within the purview of the Committee.

## BACKGROUND

The format of the Economic Forecast Conference includes an economic outlook presentation on the U.S. and State of California as well as short-term economic forecasts for the SCAG region as a whole and for each SCAG County. SCAG is the only entity in the region that provides this short term forecast. A panel discussion by regional experts presents the major theme of the conference, which is typically developed

around SCAG initiatives or emerging initiatives that will increase the personal well being of all southern Californians. The topic for our last conference was “The Southern California Trade Rush: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Gold?” The conference has been consistently successful. About 200-250 people have attended each conference.

The next (9<sup>th</sup>) Economic Conference is scheduled for the fourth week of January of 2006. The work plan, as previously reported to the Committee, calls for the conference to tie in to the release of the State of the Region report.

The Annual Regional Housing Summit was mandated by the Regional Council after the last Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). It is intended as a forum for developing a collective local government strategy to meet housing needs of the region that result in increased housing production. Past Summits have included hands-on information and demonstrations in order to assist local governments. Production is an important component in meeting our fair share of the statewide housing need. Currently the region has a significant housing cost issue. Next year’s Housing Summit is expected to attract more attention than usual because it will take place in the same quarter of 2006 that SCAG is scheduled to start the RHNA process.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No net fiscal impact.